



STAFF RECOMMENDATION

April 19, 2007

TO: Historic Preservation Commission

FROM: Jeffrey Winstel, AICP, Preservation Planner III

SUBJECT: Evaluation of Significance to Rockville of 104 Lynch Street

DESCRIPTION: West End Park Sec 2, Block 7, Lot 3

OWNER: Jennifer G. and Joseph D. Ramarui
104 Lynch Street
Rockville, MD 20850

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Based on an assessment of the history and architecture of the site, Staff finds that this property meets the adopted Rockville criteria for a local historic district.

Architectural Significance

The T-plan Howes House is a vernacular interpretation of the Queen Anne style. Architectural elements that convey this stylistic association includes the panel detailing on the fascia, the fish scale shingles covering the gable walls, and the corbelled brick chimneystack. These elements are consistent with the style's stress on ornamentation and variety of textures. The vertical emphasis of the massing was also a common element of the style. The German siding, the plain faced corner boards and the window surrounds are characteristic of vernacular architecture. Unlike the more high style Queen Anne houses along Montgomery Avenue, the Howes House represents a later and less pretentious version of Victorian-era architecture.

Both historic and non-historic alterations have been made to the structure. Non-historic alterations include aluminum siding on the rear elevation's gable wall, two vinyl windows located on the rear and north elevation respectively, and the wall facing on the façade's first floor eave-oriented section. The second floor of façade's eave oriented section is noted on a 1949 Sanborn map and does have the same siding and windows as the historic core of the structure. The building represents a vernacular interpretation of a high style that has been modified over time, but retains its massing, fenestration pattern, setting and character defining features that convey its period of construction.

Cultural and Social Significance

The Bessie and Harry Howe House is associated with the early development of the West End Park subdivision and was the home of brothers Israel and Samuel Grossman. The Grossmans owned and ran the Grossman DGS store from 1920 – 1960, and were one of the original Jewish families in Rockville. Because the commercial section of early 20th century Rockville has been razed, the homes of the business owners are the significant remaining buildings associated with this time period when Rockville was still a small town.

Locally owned and family run businesses characterized small town commercial districts throughout the county before the automobile dominated social and economic life. A family owned business was integrated into town's social and civic life -- the Grossman Brothers' Store served as the local Democratic Party headquarters. Louis Grossman recalled, "Customers were treated as friends".¹ Like other local merchants they belonged to the Chamber of Commerce, which was formed in 1938, and attended the Chamber's outing every year, when "all the stores would close and the families would get together". There was no real sense of competition between the local businesses. Louis remembers the Grossman Brothers getting extra bags when needed from the A&P Store, which was two doors down from their store.

Archeological resources: Low potential

¹Oral Interview Louis L. Grossman, conducted by Jeannine Jeffs, February 27, 1984, Rockville, Maryland.

**CITY OF ROCKVILLE
HISTORIC DISTRICT DESIGNATION CRITERIA**

104 Lynch Street

Standing structures and sites, including archeological sites, must be determined to be significant in one or more of the following criteria to be found eligible for designation:

I. Historical and cultural significance:

A. Is the site of a significant historic event.

No, this is not the site of a significant event.

B. Is identified with a person or a group of persons who influenced society.

No, this is not identified with a person or group who influenced society.

C. Exemplifies the cultural, economic, social, political or historic heritage of the County and its communities. (Refer to Rockville Context in Management Plan)

The Bessie and Harry Howe House is associated with the early development of the West End Park subdivision and was the home of brothers Israel and Samuel Grossman, owners of DGS grocery store in Rockville from 1920 – 1960, and one of the original Jewish families in Rockville. Because the commercial section of early 20th century Rockville has been razed, the homes of the business owners are the few remaining buildings associated with this aspect of small town life. Historic Resource Management Plan, Historic Context 6: Maturation and Expansion of the County Seat: 1873 – 1931.

D. Has character, interest, or value as part of the development, heritage or cultural characteristics of the City, County, State, or Nation.

Yes, the property conveys the slow but continual development of the West End Park in the early 20th century and is one of the older houses in the immediate area, excluding the West End Historic District.

II. Architectural and design significance:

A. Embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period or method of construction.

Yes, the house embodies characteristics of a vernacular interpretation of Queen Anne architecture through its vertical massing, fish scale shingles, corbelled chimney pot, decorative fascia board, and delineation of wall planes through the use of end boards..

B. Represents the work of a master.

No.

C. Possesses high artistic values.

No.

D. Represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction.

No.

E. Represents an established or familiar visual feature of the neighborhood, community or county due to its singular physical characteristic or landscape.

No.

III. Structural Integrity:

The basic shape of the building is evident, along with the façade plan (at least to the 1949 period, when the house was still owned by the Grossman family) and the fenestration pattern appears to be largely intact. Alterations would include asphalt shingle roofing material, two vinyl windows, a small deck built off the back door, and vinyl siding on the back gable. The aluminum siding could be removed and German siding installed or repaired if it remains under the aluminum siding. The vinyl window on the north elevation could be easily refitted with one that matched the original window type, as the original opening is still apparent. The Façade's T-1-11 siding and brick facing could be removed and replaced with German siding to match the rest of the wall surfaces. The 3-bay garage at the rear of the property is still extant although it needs further inspection to determine structural integrity. Mature trees are found on the property. The original site and setting is largely preserved, including the house's orientation to the street, which suggests a different street plan from the current alignment.

If the site is found to meet one or more criteria and possesses sufficient integrity, it is eligible to be recommended to the Mayor and Council as a potential historic district or landmark site. Determine the level of site significance and list the applicable criteria for the recommendation.

IV. Level of site significance: (Check those that apply)

Local: X

State

National: